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SOME NEW FACTS ABOUT ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S PARENTS.

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The parents of Abraham Lincoln deserve a fairer estimate than has been allotted them by most of the biographers of Lincoln; and the story, as told by the records that are still to be found in the archives of Little Pigeon Baptist Church, near Lincoln City, Spencer county, Indiana, of the devotion paid by the parents of Lincoln to Him who guided the lad of Pigeon Creek in the hour of the nation's travail, goes far to give to them their true estimate. In fact, they were well to do pioneers of their day; of sturdy, ancestral stock, owned a farm, domestic animals, tools and a family Bible; neighborly, sacrificing and active church-going members.

Generally, it has not been known that any of Lincoln's family were church members, and especially outside of the Pigeon Creek church were their religious views unknown. Until very recently the church itself, as composed today, did not even know that its records contained information that long ago would have set at rest many conflicting views, as well as supplied the missing link in the true history of the Lincoln family. By far the most important recent discovery of Lincoln records has been the old book of Pigeon Creek church, its well preserved condition testifying to the excellency of the turkey-buzzard-pen and brier-root-ink of

the days in which it was "pretty pinching times" for the Hoosier boy, Lincoln.

THE "MEETING HOUSE."

Pigeon Creek church was founded on June 8, 1816, the year that Thomas Lincoln and his family moved from Kentucky and settled on Little Pigeon Creek, in what was then Warrick county, Indiana Territory. It was then, as now, the chief church in that vicinity. When the "meeting house" was built, its site was selected about a mile west of Thomas Lincoln's home, the church building today occupying practically the same place. When Lincoln's mother died, she was buried between their home and the church, the graveyard not having been at that time started at the church, but when Lincoln's sister, Sarah Grigsby, died in 1828, she was buried at the church burying ground, where her grave is yet to be seen, marked by a rough stone.

This church, with its continuous existence since 1816, has only two books containing its records or minutes; the first covering the period from 1816 to 1840. It is in this book that we find Abraham Lincoln's father, stepmother and sister were active members of the Hard-Shell Baptist Church of Pigeon Creek, and this old book, with its deer skin cover, the hair still remaining, not only reveals in its crude historic way the true relig-

ion of Lincoln's parents, but gives us the best insight yet found to his own religious views.

PILLAR OF THE CHURCH.

Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks were married by a Methodist minister by the name of Jesse Head, but shortly afterward they united with one of the churches of the Baptized-Licking-Locust Association of Regular Baptists in Kentucky, and when Nancy Lincoln died in Indiana, Abraham, by his own efforts, had their Kentucky pastor, Elder David Elkins, to come to their wilderness home and preach his mother's funeral.

After Thomas Lincoln had married Sally Bush Johnston, he sent back to his Kentucky church and obtained his letter of fellowship, and as the minutes on June 1, 1823, show he united with the Pigeon Creek church, by this letter, and his wife, by experience. From that date until they moved to Illinois in 1830, their names appeared frequently in the minutes of the church proceedings, Thomas being one of the pillars of the church, acting as moderator, on committees to investigate the conduct of brethren and sisters, and messenger to associations, bearing the letter of Pigeon Creek to her sister churches.

The authenticity of this record is found on its title page as follows:

"Book for the purpes of recording the business of the church of Christ constituted by the Regular Babtis at Pigeon creek.

"Cept by William Stark."

The organization of this church follows on the second page:

"Saturday, June 8, 1816, the Baptist Church of Jesus Christ known by the name of pigeon church Warriek County

Indeanne Teritory was Constituted by Brother John Weldon & Thos. Downs a presbaty caled for that purpose whos names numbers & articles of faith and Government as follows. First the Church chose B. Samuel Bristow Moderator and Thomas Downs Clerk, For the meting."

Following this are the names of thirteen members, and then immediately following are found the articles of faith, which, in this church as in all Hard-Shell Baptist churches, was the creed of faith and practice. They read:

"1st. we believe in one god the Father the word & the holley gost who haith created all things that are created by the word of his power for his pleasure.

"2nd. we believe the old & new testaments are the words of god thare are every thing contained thare in necessary For our Salvation & rule of faith and practice.

"3. we believe in the fall of man in his public hear & That he is Incapable of recovery unless restorred by Christ.

"4. we believe in Election by grace given us in Christ Jesus Before the world began & that God Cawls regenerates and Sanctifies all who are made meat for Glory by his special grace.

"5. we believe the righteous will persevere throw grace to glory & none of them fineley fawl away.

"6. we believe in a general resurrection of the Just and unjust and the Joys of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked Eternal.

"7. we belive that Good works follow after Justification.

"8. we believe that babtism and the Lord's supper are ordenances of Jesus Christ and that true belevers are the

onely proper subjects and the onely proper mode of babtism is immersion.

"9. we believe the washing of feet is a command to be complide with when opportunity serves.

"10. we believe it is our duty severally to seport the lord's table and that we orght to administer the lord's supper At lest twise a year.

"11. we believe that no minister ought to preach the gospel That is not calld and sent of god and they are to be proved by hiering them & we allow of none to preach Amongst us but such as are well recommended And that we aught to Contribute to him who Faithfully Labers Amongs us in word and Doctrine According to our severel abilities of our temporal Things."

THE HISTORICAL MINUTE.

The historical minute which records the affiliation of Thomas Lincoln and his wife with this little pioneer church of God, attesting the fact that the boy Abraham was reared in a home, though rude and humble it was, pregnant with the teaching and the sweet influence of the Lowly Nazarene, reads:

"June the 7" 1823

"The church met and after prayer proceeded to busyness.

"1st Inquired for fellowship.

"2nd Invited members of sister churches to seats with us.

"3rd Opened a dore for the Reception of Members.

"4th Received Brother Thomas Linkhon by letter and

"5th the case of Sister Elizabeth White coled for & refired and the Brother and the brothe that was to bare a letter to his aquited.

"6. The church appoints Messeng-

ers to Represent them at the next asiation: Young Lemare Charles Harper & Wm Stark and the Clirk to prepare a letter to be inspected At our Next Meting—

"7th Received Brother John wire by Relation And Sister ———Linkhon and Thomas Carter by Experance."

As young Lincoln read every book he could get his hands upon, borrowing from friends who lived far away, there is but little doubt that he many times thumbed this little deer-skin-bound volume containing the minutes of the Pigeon Creek church, either at the meeting house before the long services, or at the home of the clerk, William Stark, where it was kept, and if Abraham was not present on this Saturday when his parents joined the church, he was certainly at the baptizing the next day when his stepmother and Thomas Carter were immersed in the waters of Pigeon, as this was always occasion for a gathering of the whole neighborhood, and especially the young folks.

A CHURCH CONTRIBUTOR.

Thomas Lincoln was not in such poor circumstances but that he always donated to the needs of his church. It was the custom in this church for the brethren to give products of their farms to repair the house and support the minister, as this church since its organization has never had a paid pastor. One interesting item is found by a minute entered in the year 1828, when it was thought necessary to build another chimney to the meeting house, which in part reads:

"We the undersigned Do agree one with another to pay the Several Somes next our names in produce this fall to be Delivered Betwixt the first & 20 of

December, the produce as follows, Corn, wheat, whiskey, soft Linnen wool or any other article a material to do the work with, the produce will be Delivered at Wm Barkers in good mercantile produce."

With several others giving various things named, under the above, appears the name of

"Thomas Lincoln

White corn

Manufactured—pounds—24"

In his church, as in his life with his neighbors, back in Kentucky as well as in Indiana, Thomas Lincoln was a leader. He was a leader of men,—in a small way, to be sure, because the horizon of the little pioneer world in which he lived was not so very far away. The last service performed for his church, before leaving Indiana for Illinois, was entered in the minutes of the First Saturday's meeting in March, 1830, as follows:

"We the under Signed Refereas being Conveaned at the meting house on the 20th February 1830 in order to Settle A difficulty between Sister Grigsby & Sister Crafford first chose brother T. Lincoln moderator & Bro. Wm. Bristow Clk. not being one of the body qualified and agreed to deside on all points by a Majority third after a long patient Investigation on the above case on motion The referees agrees that the Charge is In legal therefore agrees the defend-ant is aquited.

Attest Wm. Bristow Clk.

T. Lincoln mod.

A. Guntraman

R. Oskins

I. Oskins

D. Turnham."

Thus, we have revealed to us the religion of Abraham Lincoln's parents, his sister Sarah, and of himself. He was raised in the simple Hard-Shell faith, which in after years never left him. His own wife, after his death, of his religion said:

"It is true that he never joined a church, but he was a religious man always, as I think. He read the Bible a great deal. His maxim and philosophy were, 'What is to be will be, and no cares (prayers) of ours can arrest the decree.' "

This maxim was the essence of the Hard-Shell faith, and of the church of his father and mother and sister.

We have no record of Thomas Lincoln or his wife ever uniting with any church after they moved to Illinois in 1830. The Pigeon Creek record shows of no letters being granted to them. They doubtless found no church of their faith in the Illinois country, and they were not long settled at any place. Just before his father's death in 1851, Abraham Lincoln wrote to John Johnston, his step-brother, as follows:

"I sincerely hope father may yet recover his health; but at all events, tell him to remember to call upon, and confide in, our great and merciful Maker, who will not turn away from him in any extremity. He notes the fall of the sparrow, and numbers the hairs of our heads and He will not forget the dying man who puts his trust in Him. Say to him, if it is his lot to go now, he will soon have a joyful meeting with loved ones gone before, and where the rest of us, through the mercy of God, hope ere long to join them."

Many years ago, a few yards in front of the old log "meeting house" of the days when the Lincolns were members of the church, the new structure was erected which stands today, known as "Little Pigeon Church," one of the eight churches of the Little Zion Association of Regular Baptists, and with the Rev. Archie Brown, of Evansville, Indiana, its pastor, holding to its original articles of faith and standing a monument to the faith of the Lincoln family in Him who used their son as His servant in giving this nation of ours its new birth of Freedom.

AS TWAIN SAID.

Of a certain rough broom sage carpeted and sassafras sprout studded one hundred and ten acre tract of land, situated on the waters of Nolin's creek in Larue county Kentucky, the great Mark Twain said: "It is the little farm that produced a man." No truer words of history have been uttered. With the exception of a certain stable in Bethlehem, where was ushered the Light and Desire of the Ages into frail humanity no spot on earth's surface can claim the nativity of a greater benefactor, a greater character, a greater man than this little Kentucky homestead. Strange though it may seem, but upon the annals of history it is written that as the wise men of the East traveled to the manger side and poured forth their worship and bestowed rich gifts in the dim vista twenty centuries ago, in this materialistic marvelous new day our own eyes have beheld the paid devotion of the whole enlightened world and the journeyings

of mighty rulers to consecrate and make hallowed a rude pioneer cabin as humble and lowly as the manger itself, in which on a gray, chilly February morning one hundred and twelve years ago, Abraham Lincoln was born.

When Thomas Lincoln, facing a raw snow spitting east wind, with cheery steps strikingly out of tune with the weather, crossed the primeval forest to inform his neighbor and kinswoman, Dennis Hanks' mother, that he was the proud father of a boy, little did he by wildest flight of possible fancy imagine that the sod upon which he trod would one hundred years from that day become the dedicated shrine of the greatest nation of the earth, and at which the chief executive of that nation and a mighty host of his countrymen would assemble and pay a well purchased homage to the boy that at that moment was filling his monotonous pioneer life and wintry surroundings with the mocking bird's song and the gay daffodils of summer.

LINCOLN'S MOTHER.

The mother of Abraham Lincoln—the gentle, almost mystical, Nancy Hanks,—appears as the one bright and shining object in the dreary and monotonous pioneer background of the boyhood life of the great emancipator. No Spartan mother braver, no wild flower of the wilderness sweeter, than this obscure Kentucky girl, Lincoln's mother. Her influence remained ever present with him, and no wonder is it that when he had grown great and famous, he could say: "All that I am and all that

I ever hope to be, I owe to my angel mother."

Thus the parents of Abraham Lincoln, in the very midst of the great and new America, as they understood and

saw the light, "Walked with God," and true to His merciful guiding hand, their boy was thus shaped and the instrument fashioned to preserve and save this Union, once and forever.